

# House Armed Services Committee

## DEMOCRATS

*For immediate release  
May 5, 2005*

Ike Skelton, Ranking Member

[http://www.house.gov/hasc\\_democrats](http://www.house.gov/hasc_democrats)

### Contact:

Loren Dealy,  
HASC Democratic Communications  
(202) 226-6339

Lara Battles,  
Rep. Skelton  
(202)-225-2876

---

## More Remains to be Done to Protect our Troops in the Field

*Washington D.C.—Today the House Armed Services Committee received testimony about the need for better armor protection for vehicles and for improved technology to defeat improvised explosive devices (IEDs). The Administration's response in the early stages of the insurgency was inadequate. As a result our troops on the ground have had to get by with homemade and insufficient equipment and resources. The situation is improving, but more remains to be done.*

“While today’s hearing has shown that progress has been made in buying more armor and technological protection for our troops, clearly there are still shortfalls,” said **Ranking Member Ike Skelton (MO)**. “We owe it to every service member to provide the best protection measures available. Unfortunately, we still have a way to go before we meet that goal.”

“We have heard a lot of talk about how important this protective equipment is, but we haven’t seen anyone within the Department really leading the charge to make the process work,” remarked Rep. **Gene Taylor (MS)**.

“George Bush calls himself a war-time President, but if he can spend so much time traveling around pitching his Social Security plan, why can’t he make these armor and counter-IED programs work?” **Taylor** added.

“We started the occupation of Iraq without a post-combat plan and without the right equipment for the fight. Furthermore, we were too slow to react when it became clear that post-combat operations would be just as dangerous as the combat phase.” **Skelton** commented.

“We should have provided sufficient force protection equipment to our troops before they started coming under regular attack in Iraq, and we should have made the decision to armor all of our vehicles early on in the conflict,” **Skelton** continued.

“Had we been aggressive in ordering armor and technology to defeat IEDs, we could have fielded this equipment more quickly and cost effectively. American lives could have been saved,” **Skelton** concluded.

###